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ANALYZING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS BRAND EXTENSIONS

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ABSTRACT

Executive Summary

Markets have long recognized that this strategy provides considerable advantages as compared to the creation of an entirely new brand. Brand extension takes advantage of already established brand strengths and allow for greater flexibility. It is cheaper, quicker and less risky as compared to new a brand. Nevertheless brand extension is a complex decision and involves a clear understanding of underlying factors that influence the consumer behavior towards brand extensions. .

The objectives of this study are to (1) identify factors that affect consumer behavior towards brand extension both in related and unrelated categories, (2) develop an empirical model to relate those independent factors to consumer behavior towards brand extension (dependent factor), and (3) test the hypothesis to portray the type and magnitude of influence of these variables.

An indepth literature review identified different dimensions responsible for affecting the customers' evaluation of brand extensions. Variables that are employed in the model are (1) complementarity, (2) substitutability,

Major implications of this study are that brand extension in unrelated category should be employed related to the perceived difficulty of the planned extension as the influence of this dimension is very strong on consumer behavior towards that extension. Brand extension in related category should be employed related to the brand dominance in that category as the influence of this dimension is very strong on consumer behavior towards brand extension. Brands which have high influence in particular product category should focus more on launching related brand extensions. Brands which go into unrelated categories should focus on perceived difficulty and launch sophisticated technical product categories to be evaluated positively by consumers. Similarity in product line or category should not be focused a lot while launching extensions because consumers do not take that dimension as an important predictor of positive consumer behavior towards brand extensions.

KEYWORDS: Brand Extension, Consumer Behavior, Empirical Model, Brand Dominance & Product Line

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Original Article

INTRODUCTION

Background

Brand is basically a name, design, term, sign or symbol (The American Marketing Association) that is allied with products and services of any individual seller or the group of sellers to set it apart from its rivals (Jevons 2005). Brand is a central asset of any firm. Aaker and Keller (1990) allege that the likelihood of being successful for an extension is increased because an extension has reputable brand positioning to bring into play.

For mounting the business most of the firms go for brand extension as a line of attack. Brand extensions are believed to achieve a phenomenal success in marketplace.

For consumers, the brand can be a gesture of the quality of the new product and the evaluation process will be the result of amalgamating the information about the parent brand with information arising from the new item. Focusing on specific types of brand associations,, according to several authors extension evaluation depends on perceptions of excellency of brand, fondness for the brand and its status. Parent brand has a great influence on customer's decision making underlining the three dimensions i.e. complementarity, substitutability and transferability, on consumers evaluation of brand extensions. It is also assumed that finding the evaluations of brand extension will depend on consumer insight of the original or central brand. Similar and dissimilar brand extensions have poles apart effect on parent brand as per consumer evaluation.

Brands now days made their name in the market by inducting brand extensions not only same but also in different product category as well. On the basis of evaluation, consumer can measure the similarity between the new product and the pre-existing ones and the universal consistency and image fit with that of parent brand image (smith 2002). Similar brand extensions are likely to be more thriving as compare to the dissimilar brand extension. Brand extension is done to pull off diversification in the marketplace.

LITERATURE RIVIEW

Brands

The concept of brand came from Egyptian times when hot iron marks on bricks and products (Jalees, 2008). It is now a day's very much multifarious and mammoth concept which takes you in different dimensions in context of diversity (Jevons 2005). (Ambler & Styles 1998) presented brand as consisting of two viewpoints; tangible and intangible. Tangible in context of attributes of the product and brand itself where as intangible in perspective of perceptions and satisfactions. (Warnerfelt 1998) proposed brand as gesture of excellency of the product novelty. Assessing information from parent brand on the basis of information arising from the new product is what we called the evaluation process.

Brand Extensions

To pull out more of a brand in context of related or unrelated product categories, brand extension is a reputable stratagem for mounting businesses (Aaker and Keller 1990, Janjua 2009). Its all about parent brand which provides you with a platform to expand under its name and status as per the utmost importance (Janjua 2009). Brand extensions can be opted by horizontal, vertical and distant extensions (Pitta & Katsanis 1995).

Keeping in view the core brand the consumer can easily infer the product attributes and benefits of the extension in evaluating the brand extension just by its name and mull over that how a company can manage to do its best.

Only a handful of brand extension studies have implicitly or explicitly deliberate cutthroat effects. Global brands go for brand extension as line of attack to generate the sources of revenue, discussed by Janjua (2009). (Reddy, Holak, & Bhat, 1994; Vo¨lckner & Sattler, 2006) argued that optimistic attitude regarding extensions helps in strengthening the parent brand's significance. Extension gets highest of its attitude when there are both the things (1) insight of "fit" between two product classes (2) perception of superior quality for the core brand.

Keeping in view the core brand the consumer can easily infer the product attributes and benefits of the extension in evaluating the brand extension just by its name and mull over that how a company can manage to do its best.

Related extensions that are linked to launching product in existing category at different price and quality points are known as vertical extensions (Pitta and Katsanis 1995). The extensions if launched are at high price and quality levels are known as upscale extensions and extensions at low price and quality levels are called downscale extensions (Kamal 2003).

Consumers are more likely to judge that extensions would fly-by-night and distant if extended in an incongruent product category ultimately such extensions are then evaluated more negatively (Dawar, 1996; Kirmani, Sood, & Bridges, 1999).

Fit

Both quality and fit have considerable direct effect on brand extensions. Aakers & keller's model focus on their dimensions mostly on the influence of perceived fit. Biasness in extensions research may be positive or negative depending on the level of fit. (Han & Smith 1997) believe that US consumers lay more emphasis on brand extension fit than those of East Asian consumers. Perceived fit also have remarkable effect on post extension image of parent brand itself. Consumers takes the parent brand as the as categories in their minds as per the brand extension research (Klink & Smith 2001). So when the category partly covers the parent brand and the extension this then becomes the perceived parent brand-extension fit. So it depends as with the passage of time when similar consumers perceive the parent brand an its upcoming extension then automatically they will associate the parent brand with that of its extension (Boush & Loken 1991). Thus in this way the perceived parent brand extension fit will optimistically moderate the bond of perceived parent brand quality and perceived quality of extension (e.g., Bottomley & Holden 2001; Völckner and Sattler 2006). Perceived fit plays vital role not only in making brand extension successful but also the post extension brand image. Fit is basically the central connection between the brand and the new product. If fit doesn't play its role there will be an obnoxious gap.

Substitutability

Substitutability leads towards the high perceived quality of the core brand which is allied to the acceptance of the brand extension. Thus, a substitute extension may not prevail over low perceived quality. Brand extension evaluations can be predicted when perceived quality of the central brand is measured by substitute fit (Aaker & Keller 1990). The further argue that substitutability directs towards concrete attributes.

Substitutability means that parent brand is confronted by its own extension which ultimately generates the issue of cannibalization which then affects obnoxiously the sales of original brand which have a negative impact on consumer evaluation of brand extension and so creating new associations eventually give rise to confusion in current associations. (Ries & Trout 1981)

Substitution is a dimension of "fit" between brand and its extension (Aaker & Keller 1990). Products that act as replacement of the parent brands, they are termed as substitutes (Phang Leon 2004).

Complementarity

The degree of difficulty is in designing and making a product in the extension category which is complementarity. Similar to substitutability, complementarity may also direct towards high perceived quality of the central brand which is

associated with adoption of brand extension. So, eventually complementary extension may not conquer low perceived quality.

Complementarity is the enhancement of parent brand by brand extension (Janjua 2009). Phang Leon (2004) defined Complimentarity as joint consumption of parent brand and its extension to please a particular need. E.g. coffee and snacks launched by Starbucks are complementary extensions for breakfast. Janjua (2009) argued that existence of dimension of complementarity "fit" between parent brand and its extension might be the reason of positive consumer evaluation of brand extension. According to (Aaker & Keller 1990) argued that transferability and complementarity dimensions directs brand extensions towards success on huge scale than that of substitutability. (Janjua 2009) also supported this perception by launching hypothetical brand extensions of Caterpillar.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Model

The model of our research is as below which basically shows the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

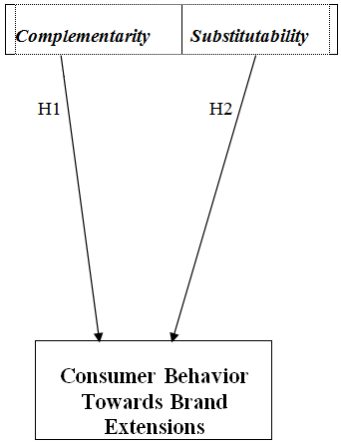

Figure 1

Equation

Y= F (β1Sub, β1Com,)

Ytr= Consumer Behavior towards Brand Extension

In the above model consumer behavior towards brand extension is dependent upon five (2) other independent variables which include

- Complementarity
- Substitutability

Conceptual Background

As we know from the above literature review that companies use this stratagem for mounting their businesses and to generate their revenues.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Hypothesis # 1

H0: Complementarity has no impact on consumer behavior.

H1: Complementarity has an impact on consumer behavior..

Hypothesis # 2

H0: Substitutability has no impact on consumer behavior.

H2: Substitutability has an impact on consumer behavior.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

We have used well known brands and their hypothetical brand extensions. We considered the hypothetical brand extensions to get to know the consumer behavior towards those extensions by based on "fit". "Fit" is divided into three dimensions based on complementarity, substitutability and transferability. Data is collected based on consumers' perception of brands and their extensions.

Population

We launched our questionnaire among students in Air University and Bahria University. We students belong to different departments of university including business administration, engineering department, social sciences department, department of bachelors in legal studies.

Sample Design

Participants involve in this sample are selected indiscriminately. Sample size is equivalent to 150. The sample is selected based on requirements of the study. The sample is selected based on their common perception about brands and the brand extension strategies. The sample is considered on the basis of their attitude towards brand; i.e. whether they consider brand as an important factor behind purchases. The survey is carried out in two universities

Instruments and Measures

The instrument that is used for the research is Questionnaire. This Questionnaire is constructed in such a way that it helps to ask sample how they perceive about brands and their extension strategies; what type of extension they would like and on what dimensions these extensions are evaluated. The data gathered through this instrument helped to analyze the factors that affect the consumers behavior towards brand extensions.

Few brands are taken upon which questionnaire is designed.. These brands differ in terms of their marketing activities and image therefore it will be helpful in analyzing the data in more effective way.

The 5-point scale is used to construct the questionnaire. Where 1 is considered to be low in terms of success and "fit", while 5 present the high level in terms of success and "fit". The brands and their hypothetical extensions are employed for this study. Moreover our work is self administered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Complementarity

Complementarity as in proposed hypothesis is analyzed with respect to all the four brands involved in the study. Hypothetical extensions were related and other four were unrelated category extensions. Hypothesis lead to following statistical representation:

H0: $\beta 1 = 0$

H1a: $\beta 1 \neq 0$

H1b: $\beta 1 \neq 0$

Substitutability

Substitutability as in proposed hypothesis is analyzed with respect to all the four brands involved in the study. Hypothetical extensions were related and other four were unrelated category extensions. Hypothesis lead to following statistical representation:

H0: $\beta 1 = 0$

H2a: $\beta 1 \neq 0$

H2b: $\beta 1 \neq 0$

Data Analysis

Regression is used to analyze the data to check the hypotheses. These hypotheses are related to test the impact of complementarity, substitutability, and transferability and its impact on consumer behavior towards brand extension.

Table 1: Regression Analyses of Consumer Behavior towards Brand Extension in Related Category

Variables	Coefficients	T Value	Significance
Intercept	.499	1.741	083
Complementarity x1	036	.940	.348
Complementarity x2	-.080	-1.747	082
Complementarity x3	-.039	-.963	337
Complementarity x4	075	2.064	.070
Substitutability x1	-.034	-.779	.437
Substitutability x2	.120	2.638	.009
Substitutability x3	.110	2.628	.009
Substitutability x4	.038	1.073	.285

From the above table we can conclude the below results:

Complementarity (H1a)

Coefficient of Complementarity Levis key chains is .075 which lies in the significant area so H1a is accepted for this extension. All other three brand extensions fall in non-significant area so hypothesis related H1a for these extensions is rejected. It shows that only H1a is accepted partially related to dimension of complementarity between Levis and its extension (Levis key chains). This statement demonstrates that Complementarity Levis key chains has influence on consumer behaviour towards brand extension.

Substitutability (H2a)

Coefficients of Substitutability urban decay beauty blender and Substitutability BMW bikes are .120 respectively, which lies in the significant area so H2 is accepted for these two extensions. All other two brand extensions fall in non-significant area so hypothesis related H2 for these extensions is rejected. It shows that only H2 is accepted partially related to dimension of complementarity of **urban decay** and its extension (beauty blender) This statement demonstrates that Substitutability urban decay beauty blender have influence on consumer behavior towards brand extension.

Table 2: Regression Analyses of Consumer Behaviour Brand Extension in Unrelated Category

Variables	Coefficients	T Value	Significance
Intercept	.575	2.892	.004
Complementarity x_5	012	310	.757
Complementarity x_6	-.063	-1.254	.211
Complementarity x_7	.143	3.372	.001
Complementarity x_8	-.056	-1.315	.190
Substitutability x_5	.041	.869	.386
Substitutability x_6	.140	2.558	.011
Substitutability x_7	.113	2.271	.024
Substitutability x_8	-.025	-.503	.615
Similarity x_5	-.040	-1.011	313
Similarity x_6	.039	877	.382
Similarity x_7	-.001	-.019	985
Similarity x_8	-.005	-.103	.918
Associations x_5	-.033	-.799	.425
Associations x_6	-.082	-1.803	.073
Associations x_7	.069	1.230	.220
Associations x_8	-.023	-.449	.654
Perceived difficulty x_5	.085	2.162	.032
Perceived difficulty x_6	.069	-1.669	.097
Perceived difficulty x_7	.017	.444	.658
Perceived difficulty x_8	.061	1.698	.091
Brand concept consistency x_5	.086	2.242	.026
Brand concept consistency x_6	.122	2.404	.017
Brand concept consistency x_7	.031	.710	.478
Brand concept consistency x_8	.092	2.075	.039
Brand dominance x_5	-.012	-.299	.765
Brand dominance x_6	.108	2.553	.020
Brand dominance x_7	.110	2.660	.008
Brand dominance x_8	.585	1.389	.166

From the above table we can conclude the below results:

Complementarity (H1b)

Coefficient of Complementarity Levis shaving kit is .143 which lies in the significant area so H1 is accepted for this extension. All other brand extensions fall in non-significant area so hypothesis related H1 for these extensions is rejected. It shows that only H1 is accepted partially related to dimension of complementarity between Levis and its

extension (shaving kit). This statement demonstrates that has influence on consumer behaviour towards brand extension.

Substitutability (H2b)

Coefficients of Substitutability urban decay jewelry are .140, which lies in the significant area so H2 is accepted extensions. Other brand extensions fall in non-significant area so hypothesis related H2 for these extensions is rejected. It shows that only H2 is accepted partially related to dimension of complementarity of (1) urban decay and its extension (jewelry). This statement demonstrates that Substitutability urban decay jewelry has influence on consumer behavior towards brand extension.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter aims to conclude the paper with a conclusion, suggestion and further research characteristics. The conclusions are organized from the literature survey and analyses of the data. It also includes the limitations of research. It ends with guidelines for future research.

Conclusion

The objectives of the study were to (1) identify factors that affect consumer behavior towards of brand extension both in related and unrelated category, (2) develop an empirical model to relate those independent factors to consumer behaviour towards brand extension (dependent factor), and (3) test the hypothesis to portray the type and magnitude of influence.

Literature review helps us to identify different dimensions responsible for affecting the consumer behavior towards brand extensions. Variables that are employed in our model are (1) complementarity, (2) substitutability.

Questionnaire was developed related to the designed empirical model. It contained the personal information and perceptions about the variables related to brands and their hypothetical extensions. Extensions fall in related and other in unrelated category. The sample size was 150, non random sampling was used from the city of Islamabad in universities.

Table 3: The Following Brands and Their Extensions Were Employed

Serial #	Brands	Related Extensions	Un-Related Extensions
1	Levis	Key chains	Shaving kit
2.	Urban Decay	Beauty blender	Jewelry

Major conclusions drawn from the above study are:

- R square value for related extensions is 0.571 which is less than the R square value of unrelated extensions i.e. 0.615. It shows that the independent factors under study have strong influence on consumer behavior towards brand extension in unrelated category than in related category. I don't know what are u trying to imply here but I guess if you are not sure then get rid of it.
- Complementarity of Levis key chains in related category was found to have significant influence on consumer behavior towards that extension. On other hand complementarity of Levis shaving kits in unrelated category was found to have significant influence on consumer behavior towards that extension. All other extensions were not significant in both categories. Therefore hypothesis H1 and H1 were not fully supported and therefore cannot be generalized. Data relating coefficients of complementarity in unrelated extension seems to have more influence on

consumer behavior towards brand extension than in related extension.

- Substitutability of urban decay beauty blender in related category was found to have significant influence on consumer behavior towards those extensions. On other hand substitutability of urban decay jewelry in unrelated category was found to have significant influence on consumer behviour towards those extensions. Other extensions were not significant in both categories. Therefore hypothesis H2 and H2 were partially supported. Data relating coefficients of substitutability in both category extensions seems to have comparable influence on consumer behviour towards brand extensions.

Recommendations

The major recommendations are as follows:

- Brand extension is the foremost strategy that should be used while planning to extend the brand.
- Brand extension should be employed with strategic planning as it is more complex in terms of consumer behavior towards brand extensions and also from some studies it is found to have powerful impacts on brand image.
- Brand extension in unrelated category should be employed related to the perceived difficulty of the planned extension as the influence of this dimensions is very strong on consumer behavior towards that extension.
- Brand extension in related category should be employed related to the brand dominance in that category as the influence of this dimension is very strong on consumer behaviour towards brand extension.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY ON BRAND EXTENSIONS

Dear participant,

We are conducting a survey for my final thesis of BBA Marketing. The topic is related to dimensions of brand extension that effect the overall consumer behavior towards brand extension.

We are curious about what you think about various brands and their hypothetical brand extensions.

Please assist me do this survey by taking the time to fill up this questionnaire, and I shall be extremely grateful to you.

All information will be treated in the confidence and results will be produced in the form of cumulative data only.

Thank you for your time and help.

INSTRUCTIONS

As stated, this questionnaire is on the subject of well known consumer brands and hypothetical brand extensions. A brand extension is defined as a new product that uses an already existing brand name. You will be asked about your judgment about 2 different brands. The questionnaire will take some time and effort to fill out, so please try to do your best and make both your and my time valuable!

Personal Information

1. Name (Optional): _____
2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
3. Marital Status: Single ☐ Married ☐
4. Education: _____
5. Occupation: _____

Brands that are chosen for this study are Levis and Urban Decay . Think critically about these brands and their hypothetical extensions than evaluate according to your perceptions.

Brand 1: Levis Key Chains

- How knowledgeable are you about this brand?

Not at all — Very much aware

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Have you ever used this brand?

Yes ☐ No ☐

- How you perceive the image of Levis?

Poor — Outstanding

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Consider that Levis Launches "Key Chains"

- Rate how much the given core brand and extended brand "**compliment**" each other on scale of (1-7). (Complimentary: tea and milk)

Low complementary — High complementary

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Rate how much the given core brand and extended brand "**substitute**" each other on scale of (1-7). (Substitutability: tea and coffee)

Low Substitutability — High substitutability

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- How will you overall evaluate this Brand extension on scale of (1-7)

Poor — Outstanding

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Consider that Levis Launches "Shaving Kit"

- Rate how much the given core brand and extended brand "**compliment**" each other on scale of (1-7). (Complimentary: tea and milk)

Low complementary High complementary

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Rate how much the given core brand and extended brand "**substitute**" each other on scale of (1-7). (Substitutability: tea and coffee)

Low Substitutability High substitutability

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- How will you overall evaluate this Brand extension on scale of (1-7)

Poor Outstanding

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Brand 2: Urban Decay

- How knowledgeable are you about this brand?

Not at all Very much aware

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Have you ever used this brand?

Yes ☐ No ☐

- How you perceive the image of Urban Decay?

Poor Outstanding

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Consider That Urban Decay along with Cosmetics Launches "Beauty Blender"

- Rate how much the given core brand and extended brand "**compliment**" each other on scale of (1-7). (Complimentary: tea and milk)

Low complementary High complementary

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Rate how much the given core brand and extended brand "**substitute**" each other on scale of (1-7). (Substitutability: tea and coffee)

Low Substitutability High substitutability

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- How will you overall evaluate this Brand extension on scale of (1-7)

Poor Outstanding

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Consider That Urban Decay along with Cosmetics Launches "Jewelry"

- Rate how much the given core brand and extended brand "**compliment**" each other on scale of (1-7). (Complimentary: tea and milk)

Low complementary High complementary

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- Rate how much the given core brand and extended brand "**substitute**" each other on scale of (1-7). (Substitutability: tea and coffee)

Low Substitutability High substitutability

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- How will you overall evaluate this Brand extension on scale of (1-7)

Poor Outstanding

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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